

Testimony for Public Hearing  
Appropriations Committee  
February 21, 2017  
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Good afternoon. My name is Sandra Fitzpatrick, I live in New Haven, and I am here to urge the committee to increase funding for magnet schools. My son, Ryan, started kindergarten at Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School this past fall. My husband and I greatly value the education he is receiving there. The manageable class sizes, quality teachers, dedicated staff, access to technology, and well-crafted curriculum are all important aspects of this quality education. But perhaps the most important part of Ryan's school experience, for us, is his peers. Diversity is so important to us and the value of having students from diverse economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds in Ryan's classroom is immeasurable. This is the keystone of Connecticut's magnet school system. We know that truly integrated schools are successful in helping students succeed in academics and in life. Magnet schools offer improved academic achievement; a diverse student body; higher attendance rates, graduation rates, and lower dropout rates; and greater parental involvement. They truly work to address issues of inequality in our society. The state has invested billions of dollars in our magnet school system, and the results speak for themselves. We should be doubling down on this commitment, not backing away from it. I understand that you and other legislators have difficult choices ahead, but that is all the more reason to carefully consider the most equitable and effective way to allocate our state's limited resources. We need to make sure we are putting our resources into things that work. Magnets schools work. I urge you to support them.

Thank you for listening and for your time and consideration on this issue.